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ABSTRACT

This is a report on the first effort to formulate an effective question for determining the ethnicity of respondents to Great Britain's 1981 census. Procedures used to design and administer the trial questionnaire are outlined. Successes and problems in contacting and gaining the cooperation of various ethnic groups represented in the study sample are analyzed. The quality of answers given and respondents' difficulties with the questionnaire are described. Also discussed are respondents' personal views about the desirability of asking about race or ethnicity in censuses and social science surveys. The results from this trial survey are compared with the current method utilized, which infers ethnicity from parental birthplace data. Appended to this report are a description of the methods by which the sample was selected, a fieldwork report, instructions for interviewers, and forms used in the survey. (GC)

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Ethnic Origins 1

An experiment in the use of a direct question
about ethnicity, for the census

Ken Sillitoe

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
EDUCATION & WELFARE
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SECTION ONE

Introduction

The purpose of the survey was to test the public's reaction to being asked direct questions about their racial/ethnic origins and to attempt to devise a form of words which would be generally understood and produce accurate answers. It is envisaged that if effective and acceptable questions for this purpose can be developed, they might be used in future censuses to replace the questions adopted in 1971, about parents' place of birth. With appropriate adaptations the ethnic classification used could then be applied also in social surveys generally and to the collection of statistics about all spheres of governmental and local authority activity which are of especial importance to the general welfare of immigrants, such as housing, employment and health.

Prior to the introduction in the last census of the question about parents' birthplaces, questions designed to find out about the ethnic origins of the population had never before been asked in censuses in Britain, although questions of this kind have been used for a long time in many other countries which have an ethnically diverse population. The reason for their late introduction in Britain is of course that prior to the 1950s the proportion of people of non-European descent in the population was very small indeed. In the '50s and '60s, however, there was a substantial influx of immigrants from New Commonwealth (NCW) countries - principally from the West Indies, East Africa and the Indian sub-continent. It was the need to study the demographic characteristics of these new immigrants and to collect information about their housing and employment that led to the introduction of the question on parental birthplaces in the '71 Census.

As questions about race or ethnic origins have been used so extensively elsewhere it might be thought that it would be easy to find some well-tried form of words and system of classification that could be adapted for use in Britain. However, a review of the questions used in different countries reveals a great variety of approaches to the subject - none of which have very much application to the British situation. The

reasons for this are implicit in the very variety of nomenclature currently in use; namely that the concepts involved are very imprecise and the ethnic distinctions of relevance in each country differ considerably. We have therefore to develop ourselves a system of classification and terminology appropriate for use in Britain. Also, in the absence of a tradition of collecting such information through the census we need to ascertain if questions of this type are acceptable by the general public. There are valid arguments for and against the general principle of collecting such information which it is not appropriate to dwell on here: suffice it to say that we need to consider not only the methodological convenience of the terms we employ but also their acceptability, especially to the minority groups concerned.

The only way to achieve our objective is through a series of empirical tests. The present survey is the first step. It was planned on a very small scale only, because of our wish not to waste resources on what might prove to be a totally misconceived approach to the subject, as well as because of uncertainty about how the public would respond.

A sample of 450 households were specially selected so as to include all the main ethnic minorities, especially those that we thought might have particular difficulty in answering questions about their ethnic identity, such as second-generation immigrants, persons of mixed descent and Asians who had migrated to Britain via East Africa. The sample was not designed to be nationally representative, nor indeed to be fully representative of each ethnic group; for this would have called for a much larger sample and raised considerable technical problems. These sampling limitations were adjudged acceptable, given the essentially exploratory nature of the study, but should obviously be borne in mind when considering our findings. A full account of the methods used in selecting the sample is contained in Appendix A.

A questionnaire was designed, to be completed by a member of each sample household giving basic demographic information about all household members, including a question about their racial or ethnic origins. We also included two questions from the last census about Housing Tenure and Amenities. The general lay-out of the questionnaire was designed

deliberately to resemble a census schedule.

The fieldwork was undertaken in four areas: Bute Town (Cardiff) in June '75, and Leicester, Camden and Brent, in July. Each household was called upon by an interviewer who after identifying herself and giving a brief account of the functions of the Social Survey Division of the OPCS, explained the purposes of the survey to the householder. Interviewers were instructed to introduce the survey broadly on the lines of the description given on the cover-page of the self-completion form (See Appendix E). Interviewers interpreted these instructions with some latitude. After their initial experiences in the field many interviewers modified their approach and placed less stress on our having included a question about race or ethnic origins when they first explained the purposes of the survey to the householder.

At the time the form was delivered, it was ascertained who would fill it in and an appointment was made for the interviewer to see that person when she recalled to collect the completed form.

When she returned, the interviewer started by enquiring if the respondent had experienced difficulty answering any of the questions on the form. If something was mentioned this was recorded on the follow-up interview schedule, together with a note of what the correct answer/s should have been. The interviewer then checked the form for any (other) ambiguities or omissions. If any were found, the respondent was asked about them and a note was made, on the follow-up interview schedule, of what the correct answer to each item should be and of the reason for the error. On no account was the original entry by the householder, on the self-completion form, ever to be altered or missing information to be inserted by the interviewer. By so doing we ensured that we knew of all the errors which were initially made in completing the forms.

The interviewer also enquired if there had been any questions which the respondent had disliked answering and providing the person did not mention a distaste for the ethnicity question, he was then asked for his views on the inclusion of questions of this kind in the census and in social surveys. The informant was also requested to give his parents' country of birth and the interviewer made a personal note of what she judged her informant's

ethnic grouping to be, on the basis of his appearance and speech.

The methods we adopted make us reasonably confident of having established the true ethnicity of the section of the sample for which we were able to obtain a self-completion form and an interview. Less certainty attaches to the classification of the non-contacts and refusals, and those for whom we obtained only partial documentation (eg where no follow-up interview was obtained). The most problematic group for classification was naturally the non-contacts. These have been classed on the basis of information from census forms (when available), inferences from names, and other information gathered by interviewers from neighbours etc. There was a small group of non-contacts where we found it impossible to ascertain the exact ethnic composition of the household, although by a process of elimination we can be reasonably sure they are either indigenous Whites or West Indians - these are shown separately in Table 1.

In the analysis which follows we first look at the degree of success we experienced in contacting and gaining the co-operation of the various ethnic groups represented in our sample. We then deal with the quality of the answers given to the different questions posed in the self-completion questionnaire. This is followed by an examination of the difficulties which people said they experienced when completing the forms, the questions which they disliked having to answer and their personal views about the desirability of asking about race or ethnic origins in the census and in social surveys generally. In Section 5 we then compare the results from this attempt at devising a direct question about ethnicity with the current method of inferring ethnicity from parental birthplace data. In the final section we summarise our findings and put forward tentative proposals for the next stage of our fieldwork.

Finally a few words about the personnel who have worked on this study. All surveys are the work of a team of people; this study especially so since it involved not only the combined efforts of people from several branches of the Social Survey, but called also for the co-operation of the staff of the Population Statistics Division who were responsible for the application of the "names analysis" to our sample of respondents, reviewed in Section 5 of the report.

The report itself is also the product of several hands. Eileen Goddard who designed the sample also wrote the Appendix on "How the sample was composed". Norah Blackshaw who supervised all the fieldwork was the author of the "Fieldwork Report". Martin Bulmer (of Population Statistics 1) wrote the Section on "Parents' birthplaces as indicators of ethnicity". The survey was designed by Ken Sillitoe. The analysis of the data from the survey was done by Lorraine Polley in consultation with Ken Sillitoe who was the author of Sections 1 to 4 and the Conclusions.

Table No. 1

Non-contacts and refusals - by ethnic composition of household

OUTCOME (S/C = Self-completion form)	ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF HOUSEHOLD							
	Total	Indigenous White	Immigrant White	West Indian	Indian	Mixed Descent	White OR West Ind /	Other 'Coloured'
	%	%	%	%	%	%	(No.)	(No.)
Filled-in S/C and interviewed	70	73	64	59	79	80	-	(10)
Non-contact because had changed address or died	11	9	13	7	11	4	(8)	(1)
Unable to contact anyone in household, despite repeated calls	4	5	6	1.5	4	-	(2)	(1)
Hsehlr seen but intvr unable to collect S/C despite repeated calls	4	3	6	8	1	4	-	-
Unable to fill-in S/C because of extreme age, illness or holidays	1	2	1	1.5	1	-	-	-
Unable to fill-in S/C because of language difficulties	1	-	2	1.5	1	-	-	-
Filled-in S/C but not interviewed	2	2	-	7	1	4	-	(1)
Interviewed but S/C not filled-in	*	2	-	1.5	-	-	-	-
REFUSED to fill-in S/C	6	4	8	13	1	7	-	(1)
BASE (Total households in set sample)	449	128	86	71	96	44	10	14

/ See para 1 page 5

* less than 0.5%

SECTION TWO

General response to the survey

Table 1 gives the results from our fieldwork with the full set sample. We have, in Table 2 (overleaf) also analysed in some detail, the reasons for refusals, because it was felt that these were more important than usual because of the special significance of the public reaction to the survey's subject matter. Interviewers were asked to find out as much as possible about why informants did not wish to co-operate and in particular to ascertain if the inclusion of a question about racial or ethnic origins was the reason, or one of the reasons. In practice, the circumstances in which refusals occur often make it difficult to obtain full information of this kind, so that we remain with a residue of answers (5 out of 26) in which the causes of the refusals are unclear. A disinclination to co-operate may also be indicated by elusiveness - pretending to be unavailable for interview to avoid the embarrassment of a direct refusal. The circumstances of all the non-contacts have been examined carefully to try to reduce such ambiguities to a minimum, but it remains more than possible that some of the 4% described in the table as, "Householder seen but interviewer unable to collect Self-Completion Form, despite repeated calls", may be concealed refusals of this kind.

It can be seen from Table 1 that the effective response rate (defined as the proportion from whom we obtained a completed form and an interview) was relatively low (70%) and for certain categories in the sample (the West Indians, for example) it was distinctly disappointing. There were two main reasons for this. First, the survey had two stages: self-completion of a form, followed by an interview. Thus more had to be done to achieve a fully effective response from a household than is the case in most social surveys, and it is natural also that it should be more difficult to persuade someone to complete a form than to answer questions orally. The second reason was that the districts in which we worked were often run-down inner-city areas (characterised by

Table No. 2

Reasons for refusals - by ethnic composition of household

REASON FOR REFUSAL TO COMPLETE FORM	ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF HOUSEHOLD						
	Total	Indigenous White	Immigrant White	West Indian	Indian	Mixed Descent	Other 'Coloured'
	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.
Too busy/not interested	6	2	-	2	-	1	1
General dislike of forms and surveys	2	-	1	1	-	-	-
* Objected to housing tenure or amenities questions	7	1	4	1	-	1	-
Objected to race/ethnic origins questions	7	1	-	3	1	2	-
Objected because questions too personal (no specific questions cited)	1	-	1	-	-	-	-
Reasons not stated or unclear	5	1	1	3	-	-	-
TOTAL OF PERSONS REFUSING	26	5	7	9	1	3	1

* Including persons who declined to co-operate because they had previously taken part in (and disliked) a Housing Survey which had recently been carried out by the local authority.

NB Some people gave more than one reason for refusing, hence the total of reasons does not always correspond to the number of persons.

multi-occupancy of dwellings, high residential mobility and large-scale urban renewal schemes) in which non-contact rates in social surveys are frequently very high; had we gone to other areas the response might have been different.

In one particular area there appears also to have been a special factor involved: the local authority had recently carried out a survey into the housing situation there which some people had taken exception to, because it was implied the information collected by the authority had been used as evidence of overcrowding. Whatever the justification for these complaints, several people voiced their disgruntlement to our interviewers, and in four instances it was cited as a reason for refusing to co-operate on our survey.

The refusal rate overall was 6% but varied considerably - from 1% in the Indian sample to 13% amongst the West Indians. If the reasons for these refusals are examined (see Table 2) we find that in only about a quarter of them was the race/ethnic origin question mentioned as a reason - the same proportion as mentioned objections to the housing tenure and amenities questions. However, it should be recalled that in five instances we were unable to obtain specific reasons and that there may be a few refusals disguised as non-contacts.

The refusals actually stated to be because of the race/ethnic origin question constitute 1.5% of the total set sample, or 2% of the total of contacted households. It should be remembered, however, that this may be a slight understatement.

The breakdown of the reasons in Table 2 does not help very much to account for the large divergences in the refusal rates between the sub-samples. The numbers of households involved are small, and therefore the minor variations are of little account, but the difference between the two principal "coloured" groups, the West Indians and the Indians, is so large that one must conclude that some of the difference at least, reflects a real divergence in their attitudes. The West Indians' objections were very varied, however, suggesting a general lack of enthusiasm for surveys. It should also be noted that the West Indian group had the highest proportion of households in which the interviewer delivered the self-

completion form but was unable to collect it again, despite repeated calls - see Table 2. This is a further indication of lack of interest in the survey. These observations correspond with the comments of our Field Supervisor - see Appendix B.

SECTION THREE

Effectiveness of the questions

In this section we shall compare the success with which our respondents answered the experimental "race or ethnic origin" question with their response to the other questions on the form. We shall also look at how effectively the ethnicity question was answered by different generations of immigrants from each of the main ethnic groups represented in the sample.

All the questions, apart from the one concerned with ethnic origins, were typical of a British census. The housing tenure and amenities questions were copies of versions intended for use in the next census. The wording and layout of the questions asking for personal information about each member of the household differed slightly from the usual census format, mainly because of space constraints and the need to achieve a measure of uniformity with the style of the ethnic origin question. The other principal difference between our form and the last census schedule is, of course, that we asked far fewer questions and on the front page of our questionnaire there was a fairly lengthy explanation of why a question on ethnicity had been included.

Table 3 provides an overall summary of how well the different questions were answered. They are arranged in order of success. The second column, entitled "Answer clear, but recorded incorrectly", covers instances such as when a person was described as a "Greek Cypriot" under the heading "other race or ethnic origin" (instead of ticking the "White/European descent" box) or when an owner-occupier became confused over the instructions about mortgages in the housing tenure question and uncertain if he should tick the "owner-occupied" box, and therefore explained that he owned the house and gave the actual length of his mortgage under "(occupied) in some other way". The third column of "ambiguous answers" includes instances of where two boxes were ticked, instead of one, or where the answer given under "other...." was unclear.

The question about outside WCs proved to be the least satisfactory, because many people failed to answer it. Then came the question about household

Table Number 3

Quality of Response - by question type

QUESTION TYPE	HOW QUESTION ANSWERED -			
	Answer clear and recorded correctly	Answer clear but recorded incorrectly	Ambiguous	No Answer
	%	%	%	%
If has outside WC	75	*	2	23
Household tenure	83	3	7	7
Race/ethnic origin	85	2	3	9
Relationship to HoH	91	*	*	9
If has inside WC	91	*	4	4
If has cooker	92	-	5	3
If has hot water supply	93	-	4	3
If has kitchen sink	94	-	4	2
If has fixed bath or shower	94	*	3	2
Date of birth	95	*	*	5
Marital status	96	*	*	4
Country of birth	97	*	*	3
Sex	98	*	*	1
Name	99	*	*	1
All questions AVERAGE	92	*	2.5	5

tenure, closely followed by our question on ethnicity. Housing tenure also received the largest proportion of ambiguous answers.

It must be stressed that we are looking here at the unaided efforts of members of the public to fill-in our forms. In a real census many of the unanswered questions and ambiguities would be noticed and rectified by enumerators and therefore the proportion of satisfactory answers which we report is appreciably lower than is usually experienced with equivalent questions in a census. It had to be done this way because it would be unreasonable to expect census enumerators to check answers with the same thoroughness as our trained and experienced interviewers, and therefore if instead we had taken the final results after checking it would have given an unrealistic view of the standard of answers that might be expected in a census. Moreover, if we wish specifically to study the ease with which the questions are understood and answered by the public it is clearly preferable to look at the replies before they are edited by an interviewer/enumerator.

The reason so many people left the question about outside WCs unanswered was that they tended to regard the questions about whether they had an outside and an inside WC as alternatives, so that if, as was usually the case, they had an inside lavatory they did not bother to say if they (also) had an outside one. Similarly, a half of the no-answers to the "race/ethnic origin" question are attributable to White/European respondents who disregarded the question because they assumed it had only to be answered by "coloured" people.* No-answers to other questions were more generally the consequence of accidental omissions or because the respondent did not know what answer to put down. Ambiguous answers, as might be expected, were usually due to misunderstanding the instructions to a particular question or to difficulty in explaining unusual or complicated situations.

Given the diffuse nature of the concept "race or ethnic origin", the unfamiliarity of the public with questions on this topic and the fact that it was our first attempt at drafting such a question, the overall quality of the answers to the ethnicity question compares not unfavourably with the response to the other questions in the schedule, all of which were much more straight-forward and had been thoroughly tested in the field previously.

* See Table 4 and commentary on page 16.

Table 4 shows, however, that there was considerable variation in how the question was answered by the main ethnic groups. The group that did best (despite language difficulties) were the Indians who had a 96% accuracy rate (if the accurate but misplaced answers are included), which is better than for the majority of questions in the schedule. Predictably, the people who had the greatest difficulty were those of mixed descent. With 20% ambiguous answers and 15% no-answers these people also clearly present us with a problem. Most of them were found in the Bute Town area which we had chosen deliberately because it contained one of the very few long-established "coloured" communities in this country, and therefore had many more adult second generation immigrants and persons of mixed descent than would be found in more recently established immigrant communities. To this extent we are looking at a group who now constitute a very small proportion of the population. On the other hand, Bute Town is a portent of the future, in the sense that the proportion of the total "coloured" population who are the UK born progeny of ethnically mixed marriages is almost certain to increase very substantially in the years ahead, and therefore it is vital (if we are to be able to distinguish this group) that the questions we ask about ethnic origins should be designed so that they are readily answerable by such people, no matter how complicated their ancestry.

Table No. 4 - Quality of response to race/ethnicity question - by ethnic group.

ETHNIC GROUP	HOW QUESTION ANSWERED -				BASE (Total persons in Sampled Households)
	Answer clear and recorded correctly	Answer clear but recorded incorrectly	Ambiguous	No Answer	
	%	%	%	%	100%
Indigenous White	81	*	-	18	(309)
Immigrant White	82	12	1	5	(164)
West Indian	84	1	4	11	(179)
Indian	95	1	*	3	(385)
Mixed Descent	65	-	20	15	(74)
Others	81	-	14	5	(43)
ALL	85	2	3	9	(1154)

The kind of difficulty facing someone of mixed descent whose forebears have been long domiciled in Britain is best illustrated by an example. One can but sympathise for instance with the complaints of the West-Indian-born Bute Town resident who asked us how he should describe the ethnic origins of the children born to himself and his Welsh-born wife whose grandfathers had both been West Africans who had married local Cardiff women.

Most cases of mixed descent, even in Bute Town, were not as involved as this, of course, and most of the ambiguous answers resulted from two boxes having been ticked (instead of the one stipulated in the instructions) in an endeavour to describe the origins of people whose descent involved just two ethnic groups. As most of the mixed descent was the result of marriages between a European and a West Indian, Arab or West African, the usual way in which this was done was to tick the "mixed descent" box and also the box for "West Indian", "Arab" or "West African". So that although such answers are strictly speaking "ambiguous", it was fairly obvious what was meant.

In the circumstances, it was perhaps not surprising that the ethnicity question was left unanswered for 15% of the people of mixed descent.

Turning to the performance of the other ethnic groups in our sample, it is disconcerting to find a sizeable proportion (18%) of the indigenous Whites did not answer the question. The reason was apparently that they did not think the question applied to them - only immigrants have a "race" ! Hopefully, this misapprehension can be dealt with by stressing that all questions have to be answered in respect of every household.

The rather large proportion (11%) of no answers from the West Indians is mostly attributable to parents neglecting to give information in respect of their UK born children. This problem will be discussed later*.

A different type of difficulty led to 12% of the immigrant Whites recording their ethnicity clearly but not in the way we had intended. Half the people who did this were Greek Cypriots. Table 5 shows how the people

* see pages 18-19

classified in the census as "Mediterranean New Commonwealth" answered our ethnicity question. It is evident from this that the Greek Cypriots were of two minds about whether they should describe themselves as White/Europeans. The Turkish Cypriots were all described unequivocally as being of "other race or ethnic origin".

Table No. 5 How race/ethnic origin was recorded for persons of "Mediterranean New Commonwealth" origin

ETHNIC GROUP	HOW RACE/ETHNIC ORIGIN RECORDED				TOTALS
	Recorded correctly as White	Recorded correctly as "Other Race/Ethnic Origin"	Recorded incorrectly as "Other Race/Ethnic Origin"	No. Answer	
Gibraltar/Malta/Gozo					
1st Generation	2	-	2	-	4
2nd Generation	2	-	-	-	2
Greek Cypriots					
1st Generation	14	-	2	1	24
2nd Generation	5	-	4	3	12
Turkish Cypriots					
1st Generation	-	6	-	-	6
2nd Generation	-	1	-	-	1
TOTALS	23	7	15	4	49

NB For present purposes we have arbitrarily classified Greek Cypriots and people from Gibraltar, Malta and Gozo, as "White/European"; and Turkish Cypriots as "other (coloured) race or ethnic origin".

The inconsistent way in which Greek Cypriots were entered on the form, although awkward, does not constitute a serious problem because even when these people were placed under "other race or ethnic origin", their origins were clearly described and could easily be recoded. This does provide,

however, a good illustration of the difficulties that result from using such loosely defined concepts as "ethnicity" and "race" in the context of a census. One can readily give several other examples of people who might well be uncertain whether to call themselves "Europeans", such as Armenians and Israelis, or the person in our sample who originated in Uzbekistan in the USSR, who was indeed as perplexed as ourselves as to which "ethnic group" he should be assigned.

The ethnic classification of "borderline" cases such as these can only be decided by the application of arbitrarily determined rules, but providing we are given an adequate description of their origins they should be relatively easy to deal with. The main concern is to ensure that we have enough information on which to base a decision. The proportion of cases that would need to be the subject of arbitrary decisions like this would almost certainly not be greater than results from "Social Class" classification, for instance.

The final aspect of the quality of response to the ethnicity question we need to examine is how effectively the second generation immigrant was catered for by the wording of the question. For the purposes of Table 6, in which we separate out the responses of first and second generation immigrants in each immigrant group, we have treated all Indians born in countries other than India as second generation immigrants (eg a Uganda-born Indian now domiciled in Britain we have called a second generation UK immigrant). It is evident from the table that the response for the second generation in all non-white groups is worse than for the first generation. In the case of the Indians, the difference is negligible but for the West Indians the divergence is very large and we see that most of the non-response and ambiguous answers relating to West Indians derive in fact from the second generation. The first generation West Indians were described almost as well as the Indians. Most of the second generation West Indians were of course children, and a half of their unanswered descriptions and all the ambiguous ones could have been inferred, as their parents origins were clearly entered on the forms.

The omitted ethnic descriptions amongst the West Indians could probably be reduced in the same way as was proposed for dealing with the missing

Table Number 6 Quality of response to race/ethnicity question - by immigrant generation

IMMIGRANT GENERATION	HOW QUESTION ANSWERED -				BASE (Total persons in Sampled Households)
	Answer clear and recorded correctly	Answer clear but recorded incorrectly	Ambiguous	No Answer	
	%	%	%	%	00%
West Indian					
1st Generation	94	2	-	4	(110)
2nd Generation	68	-	10	22	(69)
Indian					
1st Generation	96	1	-	2	(159)
2nd Generation	94	1	*	4	(226)
*Mixed Descent (2nd Generation only)	69	-	15	16	(67)
*Other non-White (1st Generation only)	88	-	6	6	(34)
All non-White					
1st Generation	93	1	2	3	(310)
2nd Generation	84	*	6	10	(371)
Immigrant White					
1st Generation	81	14	2	3	(105)
2nd Generation	83	12	-	7	(59)
Indigenous White	81	*	-	18	(309)
ALL	85	2	3	9	(1154)

* Numbers insufficient to provide a worthwhile 1st generation comparison

“ “ “ “ “ “ “ 2nd “ “

descriptions among indigenous Whites; by emphasising that all the questions need to be answered in relation to everyone in the household, including children. But it is understandable when the natural parents have stated their race or ethnic origins on the form that they should feel it to be superfluous to have to repeat the information for their children. It was for a similar reason that the question on parents' birthplace was often omitted in the last census. There is the further possibility, however, that some West Indian parents may have deliberately avoided answering the ethnicity question, in relation to their UK born children, because of a confusion between ethnic origin and nationality.

Nearly all the people of mixed descent had been born in this country so that it was not possible to contrast the answers of the first generation and second generation. We have already discussed the reasons for the high proportion of ambiguous and omitted answers in this group*.

* See page 16

Table No. 7 Self-completion form - Proportions of difficulties and deficiencies that were reported by informant or noticed by interviewer

Proportion of forms containing:						
Omissions and/or unclear entries brought to notice and dealt with by intvr as a result of difficulties mentioned by respondent	Omissions/items needing clarification NOT MENTIONED BY RESPONDENT which were:				No entries needing clarification or omissions (apart from any mentioned by respondent)	BASE (Total No. of hsehlts)
	Noticed and dealt with by interviewer		Not noticed by the interviewer			
	With omissions	With items needing clarification	With omissions	With items needing clarification		
13%	44% 19% 50%		8% 2% 9%		41%	313

NOTES

- 1) The bracketted percentages do not add to the totals indicated because many forms contained both omissions and ambiguities.
- 2) The respondents who mentioned having difficulty did not always refer to all the items which they had omitted to answer or to which they had given unclear answers, therefore some of the 13% are again included under the heading "(containing) omissions or items needing clarification not mentioned by respondent"

SECTION FOUR

Respondents' reactions

So far we have discussed the reasons people omitted answering certain items or gave ambiguous replies. In particular, we have examined in detail the reasons that particular minorities experienced difficulty when recording their ethnic origins. Our analysis was based upon the explanations and comments made by respondents and upon what could be inferred from the nature of the mistakes that were made. In this Section we shall consider some aspects of our respondents' attitudes toward the questions featuring in the self-completion form, including the objections that were expressed about parts of the subject matter.

As explained in the Introduction, the procedure adopted in the interview was first to ask the respondent if he had difficulty answering any of the questions. If anything was mentioned this was dealt with first and then the form was examined to see if there were any (other) omitted or ambiguously answered items. It is apparent from Table 7 that the proportion of forms which were said at first not to have given rise to any difficulty but which still contained omissions and ambiguities, was very considerable. Often things had been omitted accidentally or because people did not think a particular question applied to them, and ambiguous answers were sometimes given unwittingly; but it is also apparent from the explanatory remarks made by many respondents when asked about unclear answers or items they had missed out, that very many people were conscious of having problems when completing the forms which they did not mention at first. One is uncertain, therefore, to know what significance to attach to the difficulties that were initially mentioned by informants.

If one compares the questions which were mentioned as causing difficulty (in Table 8 overleaf) with the actual quality of response to all the questions (in Table 3), and to the ethnicity question in particular (see also Table 4), one finds there is considerable inconsistency. When allowance is made for the amenity and ethnicity items that were left unanswered because the respondents thought they did not apply to them*, the housing tenure question would appear to be the one in which actual difficulties in answering the question had the greatest effect on response.

*See page 14

But Table 8 shows that with all but two of the main ethnic groups in the sample, it was the ethnicity question which was most often cited as having been troublesome. That the mixed descent group said this is hardly surprising; but it is a bit puzzling that the Whites, both indigenous and immigrant, should also have done so. It is also curious that the West Indians seldom complained of having difficulty with the ethnicity question, although they had not answered it very well; whereas the Indians who had answered it extremely well, complained more often of having difficulty with it. The poorer quality of response from the West Indians may, however, have been attributable to other factors such as dislike for the question or a general lack of interest in the survey, whereas the Indians, who were very co-operative, appear to have had trouble with several questions, more often than did the other groups. This is almost certainly because many of them were handicapped by an inadequate understanding of English and in fact because of this several families obtained the help of someone from outside the household to help fill-in the form.

Table No. 8 Questions respondents said they had difficulty answering - by ethnic composition of household

QUESTIONS THAT CAUSED DIFFICULTY	ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF HOUSEHOLD						
	Total	Indi- genous White	Immi- grant White	West Indian	Indian/ Pakistani	Mixed Descent	Other 'Col- oured'
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Q2 Relationship	1	2	-	2	-	3	-
Q4 Marital Status	*	2	-	-	-	-	-
Q5 Date of Birth	1	-	-	-	4	-	-
Q6 Country of Birth	2	2	-	2	3	-	-
Q7 Race or Ethnic Origin	7	4	5	2	9	17	-
Household Tenure	4	1	-	2	12	-	-
Amenities	1	2	-	-	1	-	-
Difficulty in understanding all questions	1	-	-	5	-	-	-
No difficulties	87	88	94	88	79	80	-
BASE	313	95	55	42	76	35	10

But we have still to account for why the Whites, for instance, gave more emphasis to their difficulties with the question on ethnic origins when, so far as can be judged from the relative quality of the answers, it was the housing tenure question that created the most problems for people. There are probably two explanations for this. First the ethnicity question was the only one which respondents would be unlikely ever to have encountered before. Secondly, it was also stressed in the preface to the form (and often by the interviewer too) that all the questions were commonly included in the census and in social surveys; except for the one about ethnicity, which had been put in as an "experiment". Thus, the manner in which we introduced the survey might of itself have prompted some respondents to give greater emphasis to the difficulties they had with this particular question. It is impossible really to know to what extent unfamiliarity alone might have been the cause of it being singled out for comment more often and how much this was due to the way in which we introduced the survey. To ensure we do not encourage this kind of reaction, however, it might on a future occasion be preferable for us to avoid giving so much emphasis to the novelty of the question.

Table No. 9 Spontaneous objections to questions asked -
by ethnic composition of household

QUESTIONS DISLIKED	ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF HOUSEHOLD						
	Total	Indi- genous White	Immi- grant- White	West Indian	Indian	Mixed Descent	Other 'Col- oured'
	%	%	%	%	%	%	(No.)
Relationship to HoH	1	2	-	2	-	-	-
Date of birth	1	1	-	2	1	-	-
Own country of birth	*	-	-	2	-	-	-
Race/ethnic origin	2	-	5	10	-	-	-
Household tenure	*	-	-	4	-	-	-
Amenities	*	1	-	-	-	-	-
Felt qn about religion or nationality should <u>also be asked (eg</u> <u>Indians wishing to</u> <u>stress they are SIKHS)</u>	1	-	-	-	3	-	(1)
BASE (Total hsehlds.)	313	95	55	42	76	35	(10)

The next, very important, aspect of the response to the ethnicity question that we need to examine is its general acceptability. After enquiring about the difficulties people had dealing with the form, we asked, "Were there any questions which you did not like answering?" And then (providing they had not already said they objected to it) we went on to enquire, "How do you feel personally about people being asked, in the census and in social surveys, about their race or ethnic origins?" The answers to the first question are summarised in Table 9 and to the second, in Table 10. The spontaneous objections were very few indeed. West Indians were the group with the most dislikes; they had a few complaints to make about most things but it was the ethnicity question about which they had the most to say.

The immigrant Whites who took exception to being asked to state their race or ethnic origin were all Jews. Not one of the Indians, at this stage, expressed dislike for the question, but two or three stated that they felt we should have asked also for their religion. In this connection, it is also worth noting that nearly half the Indian sample carefully crossed-out "Pakistani or Bangladeshi" from the description printed against the box they had to tick. It is interesting that none of the respondents from households with a mixed ethnic composition objected in principle to the question, despite the difficulty some had in answering it.

When finally we asked openly for our respondents' views about the desirability of collecting information about ethnicity, we naturally drew forth a few more misgivings -- see Table 10, but the great majority of people in all groups were in favour, or had no pronounced feelings for or against. A few said they approved providing the information was not mis-used.

Naturally, each ethnic group tended to have a distinctive approach to the issue which reflected how they personally would be affected by the asking of such questions. Within each group too, there was a wide variety of response and many different (and interesting) points were made, both for and against the general principle involved.

Had we attempted to summarise the verbatim answers under a number of general headings, we could only have highlighted a few of the more clearly articulated and commoner viewpoints, and it would have blurred a great deal that is of

Table 10

Answers to direct question about inclusion of race/ethnic information in Census/Surveys
- by ethnic composition of household

A N S W E R S	ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF HOUSEHOLD						
	Total	Indigenous White	Immigrant White	West Indian	Indian/ Pakistani	Other 'Coloured'	Mixed Descent
	%	%	%	%	%	(No.)	%
In favour/ don't mind/not bothered /don't feel anything	90	90	89	81	91	(9)	97
Approved provided information is not mis-used	3	3	4	2	3	-	3
Uneasy about or dislikes race questions /	4	2	5	12	3	-	-
Don't really understand reason for collecting this information	*	-	-	2	1	-	-
Irrelevant answers/ language difficulties	3	4	2	2	3	(1)	-
BASE (Total households)	313	95	55	42	76	10	35

/ Including those who had already objected spontaneously to the ethnicity question and who therefore were not asked again what they thought about it - see Table 9 and text.

interest. So instead, we have selected a number of the answers received from each of the principal ethnic groups to illustrate their reactions. As the great majority were in favour of (or did not mind) information being collected about ethnicity, to have taken a random selection would have produced a very repetitive list and at the same time have missed out some of the more instructive answers.

The method we have adopted, therefore, is to select the replies which best illustrate all the main points which were made, for and against. These are arranged on the following pages, by ethnic group. The principal defect of this strategy is that it does not reflect the relative frequency with which particular answers occurred; and it tends to give undue prominence to the adverse comments of which we have had to include a very high proportion in order to cover all the shades of opinion expressed. This needs to be borne in mind when reading through the following lists.

Many of the replies were highly personal and demonstrate well how very sensitive people are to this issue. It is all the more noteworthy, therefore, that so many who felt themselves to be personally affected, responded both rationally and favourably to the proposal that a question on ethnicity be introduced.

WEST INDIANS

" I feel if it's the census, they have to ask about it. It seems alright. They have to know where we originate from".

" Well, I don't feel bad about it. It doesn't upset me. To be frank, when I got the form I was a bit worried. I didn't know what it was about, but after reading it I was satisfied".

" I've no feelings - just natural one should want to know. I couldn't say I was English - just look and you would know".

" Why do they want to know that? They shouldn't really want to know. I am just a man. These censuses don't help. This flipping council don't do anything. (They) are severe against the people that are living in the area. If they find that 75% of people are black they try to break down the house. We have bought this house and then they want to break it down, but I have worked on it and its in good condition. This ***** Council they try to survey the area to redevelop".

" I find it something embarrassing because there is no such thing as a West Indian race; the Africans are a race - but West Indians aren't, are they? I think the word ethnic is something to do with religion, a heathen or something like. I don't think that word should be in the question at all - the definition in the dictionary I don't know".

" Don't think that should come into it. Don't see what difference it makes what race you are, what colour you are - we are all equal".

" It doesn't bother us. Some of us are black and some of us are white, and there is no way that that can be changed. It would be silly to try wouldn't it?"

" There's no way about it. Anything you do in this country you've to put your place of birth, so I don't see anything in that. The thing about it is you have to tell what your race is. Well, if you're black you're black; if you're white you're white; that's the way I look at it".

" Alright. Government trying to do what they can. They are finding out what's going on".

INDIANS

" Alright. If you are a Sikh Indian there's nothing to be ashamed through telling what you are".

" I should be proud to tell them what I am".

" I don't mind as long as they don't say 'coloured' people".

" It seems to me alright. As far as government job alright, but if any secret society, think is not good. Is good government knows people but no one else should ask".

" There is nothing curious in it nothing deep. They were all on the surface questions. Things like religion doesn't occur. I think that plays a large part in the community, doesn't it? I just feel if it had been there you could separate us in different groups in which we are divided".

" I think you should have broken the (race or ethnic origin box for Indian sub-continent) into Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi. Moreover, I am not an Indian, I am Hindu by caste (sic)-but a British subject. If you call yourself Indian you are a citizen of India. It's not that I didn't like - if you want a survey it should be to get to the precise answer. That's why I think that column should be broken down - and truly these boxes aren't applicable. I am a British subject by birth, so none of those boxes are applicable to me" (TANZANIA-BORN INDIAN).

" I think it's a good idea because it helps the officials work out what they are dealing with. If they can pick out the problem and deal with it more easily, that's fine".

" It is a good thing. I feel it might show people with qualifications, if they are Indian, get good enough jobs".

" What means 'ethnic origins'? Not taking objections to it, but I am not clear what it means. I understand 'race' ".

" I think you people require some records from us? You would like to calculate the population of Asians in this country, isn't it? Alright".

" I'm Indian not Pakistani. I'm Hindu. It's better for government to know. I want a free life".

IMMIGRANT WHITES

- " It's nothing to worry about. I have lived here 40 years. I don't mind telling about my origin. I am a British subject but proud I am a Cypriot".
- " I don't mind. I'm not ashamed of my origin. I can't help it, if I wanted to. My parents might be ashamed of their origin if they were alive, but I'm not, I don't mind being asked about it at all".
- " My opinion is that everyone should do it. It's much easier to organise life for everyone the government can organise a better life for everyone".
- " I think if there is research it's a good idea why not? Research about various groups that are in England".
- " For this purpose, yes it's OK. There is a need to find out who is in the country. If it was used for other sorts of work, commercial things, I wouldn't like it".
- " I have been at the receiving end of racial discrimination and I don't care for it. I don't care for dividing people into ethnic groups: we are all people and should not be divided into groups. I can see the reasons for having to do it, but having suffered once from it I'm a Jew from Germany, I don't want to help to divide the community again".
- " (Did not like question) because I felt it was racial. Arabs are mentioned, but are Jews a race or a religion? I'm a Jew and I don't like to think that it doesn't come into 'ethnic'. Also, I feel that questions on the back page have no connection with race or ethnics and are just a cover-up for the other questions".
- " (I approve) provided it's put to good use. I've no objection provided the information is used and not just collected and stored used to help those in the minority groups help with language problems".
- " I don't care a monkey. I'm strongly against colour bar".
- " I don't think there's anything against it. If it helps them, so much the better. I do disagree with very personal questions. I think it can help a great deal".

INDIGENOUS WHITES

" It doesn't bother us: I could see possibly it may the non-English ones. I'm used to using the results of the census - so how can you get a true picture if you don't ask these questions?"

" It's very difficult. I personally don't mind and I can see that its necessary, but I think a lot of people are going to feel that they're being got at. I'm a teacher and I have large groups of immigrant teenagers to deal with. They're terribly sensitive about that sort of thing. There are so many different things to find confusing - so many things are lumped together in one question. I mean race or ethnic origin. If mixed descent - its confusing. What do you really mean by that? If you had a German mother and a West Indian father you wouldn't know how to describe yourself".

" It's perfectly logical. It's all for their own benefit. I work in a school and there are language difficulties. The authorities have to know how many they've got to cater for. We took statistics in the school and there was trouble about it because most of the kids are second generation. I don't think it's offensive. It's for their own benefit".

" Nothing to do with me. They please themselves what they are as long as they don't interfere with me. You should have gone across the road - there are hundreds living in that house".

" Well I mean it doesn't make any odds does it? I mean if you're black you're black, aren't you? They're here now and its too late to stop them so I don't see the problem myself".

" I've no quarrel at all with it. I can't see why they shouldn't (answer the question). We should all be proud of our countries, don't you think? Mind you, we can't sing "Rule Britannia" any more, can we?"

" Don't feel any objections at all. It's a logical question to ask, you could be born in Jamaica and still be white".

" It's the only way you are going to find out. These politicians sail along and unless they have the facts how can they talk about it. I don't see why it shouldn't be asked".

PEOPLE OF MIXED DESCENT AND OTHERS

" It's obviously a very personal thing, but quite frankly I've no objection whatsoever. You get forms and answer questions and you may get witch-hunts at times. I've lived here for four years but it was only when I started doing some work on the car that I realised there were so many Jamaicans around here, when they all came up and started chatting".

(MIXED DESCENT)

" The mixed descent bit. I have to say where my wife's grandparents were born. My wife and children were all born in Wales, so I think they are Welsh. I just found it difficult to know what you wanted me to put there". (Informant WEST INDIAN; wife THIRD GENERATION DESCENDANT OF MIXED AFRICAN/INDIGENOUS WHITE MARRIAGE, IN BOTH MATERNAL & PATERNAL LINE)

" I don't mind at all. You are what you are. Some people are foreigners, they may have a white face but don't like to say they've got coloured blood in them. My two sisters are white-skinned, but I follow my father, dark-skinned. I am Arab and that's that".

" Doesn't worry me. Some people are very touchy about their colour. I'm a little darker than average white, but if I was darker it wouldn't worry me. I don't believe in racial discrimination a lot of coloured people have their own prejudice; they have this attitude 'Just because I'm black I have to put up with so and so' ". (MIXED DESCENT)

" We assume any child born in a country they are citizens of the country. I came here for my children. I regard myself as Nigerian but that is only for myself. I think my children will regard themselves as British. I think its important (to ask about race or ethnic origins) because we are living in a mixed society and its good to find out where people come from originally. I think its in order".

" Don't know. I've always thought of my husband as white and British. It's never cropped up really. No-one else has queried it. In this day and age nobody worries about it. I must say Kensal Rise finished me off as coloured people went. It doesn't worry me. I think it's quite interesting. Some people do get upset about it, I suppose". (Informant INDIGENOUS WHITE; husband CEYLONSE)

We have now looked in some detail at people's reactions to being asked about their "race or ethnic origins". The few complaints from the Indians were directed not so much toward the principle involved, but rather to the way in which we had categorised people; they felt we should have asked which religious community they belonged to. The objections of the West Indians and Jews were expressed as being more a matter of principle.

Jews, of course, were not themselves personally affected, in the way that people in the groups we were attempting to distinguish were: although there was a hint in one or two of their replies suggesting that perhaps Jews ought to have been distinguished - because the Arabs had been. It is also noteworthy that all the objections were from Jewish immigrants, not from indigenous Jews. We, of course, have no indication of how many Jews there were amongst our indigenous Whites, but there are almost certain to have been some.

In the last table in this Section we have summarised all the objections that were registered throughout the survey to the ethnicity question; including the households which refused to co-operate on the survey at least partly because they objected to having to state their ethnic origins. Table 11 brings home very forcefully that it was the West Indian group who had the most doubts about the desirability of collecting information of this kind. Only 1 in 20 of the West Indian households completely refused to co-operate, solely or partly for this reason, but when we include the misgivings of those who did agree to fill-in the form we find that as many as 12% were dubious to some degree about the ethnicity question; which is three times the proportion found in the other immigrant groups.

Table No. 11 Summary of objections to ethnicity question, made at all stages of survey

	ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF HOUSEHOLD				
	West Indian	All other "coloured" (incl mixed)	Immigrant White	Indigenous White	Total Sample
Persons refusing totally to co-operate, at least partly because of having objections to the ethnicity question	5	2	0	*	2
Others who completed the form but expressed misgivings about ethnicity question in interview	7	2	4	1	3
TOTAL OF OBJECTIONS MADE AT ALL STAGES OF SURVEY	12	4	4	1	5
BASE (100%) Total of contacted households, including those where contact was made but form/ interview not completed	(65)	(135)	(70)	(180)	(380)

- Notes:
- 1) The bases and percentages in the above table differ from those in Table 10 because the latter is based on the sample of households from whom we obtained both a completed form and an interview - whereas the above table is based on the total households with which we made contact, which includes some from whom we failed to get a completed form back or a follow-up interview.
 - 2) As noted in Section 1, we must also allow for a few of the people from whom we were unable to obtain a completed form, having deliberately avoided doing it because they disliked the questions we were asking. Similarly, some of those from whom we obtained a form but failed to obtain an interview, might also have expressed misgivings about the ethnicity question - had they been asked.

SECTION FIVE

Parents' birthplaces and personal names as indicators of ethnicity

As mentioned in the Introduction, the 1971 Census included for the first time questions about the country of birth of the father and mother of each person enumerated. It was widely recognised at the time that this was an attempt to identify more clearly immigrants and the children of immigrants, particularly those of New Commonwealth descent. As the ethnicity of everyone in the survey sample had been firmly established, it offered a good opportunity of testing how reliably one can in fact infer people's ethnic origins from parental birthplace data and to gauge how much would be gained from replacing the '71 Census question about parental birthplace by an effective direct question about each person's racial or ethnic origins.

Parental birthplace data was available for almost all respondents in the sample. In the case of children, it could be established directly from the birthplaces of their parents on the same questionnaire. For the great majority of adults it was obtained either from the interview or by matching 1971 Census records. For a very small number of cases it was necessary to infer the parental birthplaces without further information.

A comparison of the results of this classification with the householder's ethnic group (as established in the survey), are shown in Table 12. From this, it appears that in the case of persons with both parents born in the UK, Eire, the Old Commonwealth or Europe, there is a very high degree of homogeneity; 97% are white. By contrast, of persons with both parents born in the American New Commonwealth, 96% are West Indians; of persons with both parents born in India, 99% are Indian. These birthplace groups provide a very good indicator of ethnicity, a finding (if generalisable) which is of some significance for the interpretation of the 1971 Census data.

Similarly, the group with one parent born in India and one in the African NCW (all of whom were also themselves born in the African NCW) were all found to be of Indian descent and therefore, if in future censuses it is decided to continue to rely upon inferring ethnicity from parental birthplace data, it might be appropriate to show this group separately, or to include it with the main body of Indians whose parents were both India-born.

Table No. 12

Ethnic group of each householder - by parents' birthplace

HOUSEHOLDER'S ETHNIC GROUP	PARENTS' BIRTHPLACE									
	Both parents born in -							One parent born India one parent born African New Commonwealth	Others with parents born in different areas	Total
	UK/Eire/ Old Common- wealth or Europe	Medi- terranean New Common- wealth	American New Common- wealth	India	African New Common- wealth	Asia/Oceania New Common- wealth	Else- where			
	%	%	%	%	(No.)	(No.)	(No.)	%	%	%
White (European descent)	97	84					(3)		18	41
West Indian			96							16
Indian				99	(15)			100	10	33
West African					(15)					1
Arab							(12)		1	1
Other "Coloured"		16	*			(3)	(4)			1
Mixed descent	3		3	*	(2)		(1)		70	6
BASE (Total persons in sample households)	433	45	186	310	32	3	20	54	71	1154

This would not, however, completely resolve the difficulty of identifying persons of Indian descent who were born outside of India, as is evidenced by the fact that nearly a half of the group with both parents born in the African NCW were also of Indian descent.

The Mediterranean NCW group was also somewhat heterogeneous; 84% being classified as White and 16% as "Other 'Coloured'" - reflecting the ambiguity discussed earlier* as to the ethnic identity of this group.

The other principal difficulties in inferring ethnicity from parental birthplace data are with persons born in the "Elsewhere" census category, which includes a large number of non-Commonwealth countries (without regard to whether they have predominantly White or "Coloured" populations); and most importantly, in relation to the group described in the Table as "Others with parents born in different areas". Both these groups are ethnically very heterogeneous and the latter one is of especial importance, as it includes people with one parent born in the New Commonwealth and one parent born elsewhere, of whom there are a large number in the general population. Thus, The 1971 Census Country of Birth Tables, Table 2, shows the following breakdown for persons born in the UK, who had at least one parent born in the New Commonwealth:

	<u>Individual born UK</u>
Both parents born NCW	327,000
One parent born NCW, one British Isles	295,215
One parent born NCW, one in Old CW	1,970
One parent born NCW, one in neither British Isles nor Commonwealth.	21,385
One parent born NCW, one not stated (from Table 7 in the same Census Volume) - part of 'either or both not stated' column in Table 2.	7,965

Of persons with one or both parents born in the NCW, exactly half had both parents born in the NCW, and for several areas of the NCW strong inferences as to ethnicity may be made in these cases. However, half had only one parent born in the NCW, and much more doubt attaches to the ethnic character of these groups, which include whites, persons of mixed descent and persons

* See pages 16-17

of coloured ethnic groups, in proportions which are difficult to determine. As inter-marriage between different ethnic groups increases, so the problem of making inferences from parental birthplaces will become even more difficult in future.

One way to throw light on this problem is to analyse persons' names in order to estimate their ethnic origin. This estimating procedure yields estimates or orders of magnitude rather than absolute precision, since it is based ultimately on subjective judgement. However, persons in certain ethnic groups do have easily identifiable names, and the method has been used over several years by OPCS Population Statistics Division 1 in the analysis of the ethnic origin of births and deaths occurring in England and Wales. (This procedure is more fully described in an article by Sir Claus Moser (1972)*; and in earlier articles in the Registrar-General's Quarterly Returns No's 487 and 488, 1970).

For example, members of the Hindu, Sikh and Muslim Communities normally have distinctive and easily recognisable names. Many Africans have long names beginning with the letter A or O. Persons of Mediterranean Commonwealth origin frequently have names of Greek or other distinguishable origin. Such an analysis can therefore be undertaken with a fair degree of confidence for those areas of the Commonwealth. The assumption used for the NCW American-born population and their children (who normally have British-style names) is that they are all of NCW American descent for, unlike India and Pakistan, the proportion of persons of United Kingdom descent born in NCW America is likely to have been very small, and the assumption may be made that the NCW American-born and their children are of NCW American ethnic origin.

Strictly speaking, therefore, the procedure used is not to analyse names as such alone, but names in conjunction with birthplace and (where available) parental birthplace data. Analysis of names thus supplements, rather than provides an alternative to, inferences derived from birthplace

* Sir Claus Moser, 'Statistics about immigrants: objectives, methods, sources and problems'. Social Trends No. 3, 1972.

data alone. Results of the application of these procedures to 1971 Census country of birth data are presented in the article 'Country of Birth and Colour - 1971-74', appearing in Population Trends No. 2, December 1975. The article includes an account of the methodology.

For the purposes of the present survey we used the data collected on the self-completion form. All the forms were photo-copied and then Question 7 (on "race or ethnic origin") was cut off from each copy. The truncated photo-copies were then passed to Population Statistics 1 Division, whose staff experienced in this work were asked to carry out an analysis of names for each individual respondent. At this stage, no explanation was given to the staff doing the work either as to the origin of the data, the fact that it had included a question on race or ethnicity, or what would be done with their results. The aim was to create a situation in which, so far as possible they carried out the analysis 'blind'. The staff doing the analysis classified persons as 'non-NCW ethnic origin' or 'NCW ethnic origin'. For those classified as the latter, they were further subdivided into Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi origin, NCW American origin, NCW African origin, NCW Mediterranean origin, and other NCW origins (mainly Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Singapore and Hong Kong). Persons of mixed ethnic origin, for example, children with an Indian name with one parent born in India and one in UK, were included in the NCW ethnic origin group. Persons of mixed ethnic origin from outside the NCW (of whom there were a number in Cardiff) were however classified as non-NCW ethnic origin.

The principle results are shown in Table 13, which compares the results of the analysis of names with the Social Survey assessment of the householder's ethnic origin. From this it appears that the method of names analysis identified almost all persons of West Indian, Indian etc. and West African race or ethnic origin according to SSD, in the appropriate ethnic origin category used by Pop Stats 1.

Persons of Mediterranean NCW origin, as mentioned previously, presented problems which are conceptual rather than inherent in the method.

The main limitation of the names analysis appears to lie in its treatment of persons of mixed origin. For speed of analysis, these were not

Table No. 13

Ethnic group of each householder - by ethnic origin as inferred from an analysis of names
(see text)

ETHNIC ORIGIN AS INFERRED BY ANALYSIS OF NAMES (See text)	RACE OR ETHNIC ORIGIN AS ESTABLISHED IN SURVEY						
	White	West Indian	Indian	West African	Mixed	Other 'Coloured'	Total
AMERICAN NCW		175			17	2	194
INDIAN/ PAKISTANI/ BANGLADESHI		2	381		14		397
AFRICAN NCW				14			14
MEDITERRANEAN NCW	41					7	48
REMAINDER NCW					5	3	8
NON-NCW	433	1	1	1	38	16	490
TOTAL	474	178	382	15	74	28	1,154

distinguished as a separate category in inferring ethnic origin from names, and the totals for those of NCW American and Indian etc ethnic origin therefore include a small number of persons of mixed origin. The group estimated to be of non-NCW origin also includes 38 persons of mixed origin and 16 'others' in the survey classification, who were not distinguished when the names analysis was carried out. This is partly accounted for by the fact that the analysis of names has been developed to identify persons of NCW ethnic origin, since these have formed the vast majority of coloured immigrants into this country. The method does not attempt to identify coloured immigrants from other countries outside the Commonwealth, a number of whom were clustered in the Cardiff sample in this study.

One conclusion to be drawn from this pilot exercise is that names and birthplace data together appear to permit at present the identification in almost all cases of the 'core' coloured population; in the case of the West Indians, birthplace data alone is the means of identification. For the ethnically "mixed" population, however, the method is less precise, no doubt reflecting the acute conceptual difficulties which this group poses for consistent statistical treatment. Too much weight should not perhaps be given to this consideration, in view of the fact that the sample selected included an area in Cardiff with a particularly heterogeneous long established ethnically mixed community, which may exaggerate the size of the problem so far as the present population of the UK is concerned. But as was pointed out earlier, the proportion of the total "coloured" population who are the UK born progeny of ethnically mixed marriages is likely to increase very substantially in the future.

Another weak point of the analysis of names method lies in its treatment of persons of NCW American origin, since this identification depends upon having full parental birthplace and individual birthplace information. Two factors suggest that this may present difficulties in future. In the 1971 Census, non-statement of one or both parents' countries of birth was 3.2% for the population as a whole, 4.2% for the parental birthplaces of persons born in the NCW and (within the latter group), 8.0% for the parental birthplaces of persons born in NCW America. There is thus some evidence of difficulty in complete census information gathering from those of NCW American origin, consistent with the higher non-response rate obtained from West Indians in the present survey.

Table 14 Age structure at 1971 Census of persons born in the UK, both of whose parents were born in the New Commonwealth

Age	Males	Females	Total	Cumulative percentage from 0 - 65 +
0-4	79,725	77,570	157,295	48.1%
5-9	57,325	56,840	114,165	83.0%
10-14	20,945	20,180	41,125	95.6%
15-19	4,050	3,055	7,105	98.0%
20-24	1,295	1,285	2,580	98.8%
25-34	880	935	1,815	99.4%
35-44	420	405	825	99.5%
45-64	430	520	950	99.9%
65 +	120	215	335	100%
Total	165,190	161,810	327,000	

4. Further, and much more substantial difficulty in using parental and individual birthplace data in the future, is that just as in the past individual birthplace data became insufficient and parental birthplace data was also collected, so in future parental birthplace data may not be enough. In theory it would become necessary to gather information on the birthplaces of grandparents and eventually even great-grandparents.

In 1971, the "third generation" - children of NCW ethnic origin born in the UK whose parents were also born in the UK (but whose grandparents were born in the NCW) - was demonstrably very small in number.

The age structure of persons born in the UK with both parents born in the New Commonwealth (the 'core' coloured population) was as shown in Table 14. Only 4.4% of this population were age 15 or over, and only 1,480 were women in the childbearing ages of 15 to 44, whose children would form the majority of any 'third-generation'.

However, by 1981 the size of the group of women of childbearing age will have increased to approximately 80,000 (allowing for mortality and migration). If the 1981 Census follows the 1971 format, none of their children will be identified as being of NCW ethnic origin from parental birthplace data. A substantial proportion of this group of UK-born children to UK-born mothers will be of NCW American origin, and will not therefore be identifiable by means of an analysis of names either.

Estimates of the age structure of the UK-born population of NCW ethnic origin as a whole (including those with one parent born in the NCW, or one or both parents not stated) appear in the article in Population Trends, No. 2 already referred to (page 39). These suggest that by 1981, there will be in Great Britain approximately 150,000 women of childbearing age (15-44) [including the 80,000 discussed above] of NCW ethnic origin (allowing for mortality and migration), who were themselves born in the U.K.

SECTION SIX

Summary and Conclusions

As we explained in the Introduction, this survey was essentially a feasibility study aimed at investigating whether the public would be prepared to answer direct questions about their racial or ethnic origins, and also to test out our initial attempt at devising a suitable question for this purpose. We were conscious that a question on ethnicity conceived in terms of national origins only, could not provide all the information that is needed if we are effectively to distinguish between all the main ethnic sub-groups now present in the population of the UK. We knew that for persons of Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi descent, for instance, it is not the part of the Indian sub-continent from which they or their parents originated that is important, but the religious community to which they belong and which cannot always be inferred from their national origins. For the purposes of estimating the special teaching provisions needed in schools, to cater for children who are brought up in homes where English is not normally spoken, it would be most useful if we were also to ask about the language which is usually spoken at home. A further consideration, which whilst not of direct concern to our immediate aim, could affect the acceptability and presentation of the question we asked about ethnicity, was that we were aware that it might be necessary in future censuses to introduce a question about nationality or citizenship in order to satisfy EEC requirements.

Our central concern, however, was to see if it was possible to devise an acceptable basic question about ethnicity that would provide more reliable information than is obtainable by inference from parental birthplace data, and which unlike the latter could continue to be used to produce comparable data for many years to come. We felt that if we were to try out our first attempt at such a question together with other new questions about religion, nationality and so on, the results might be confusing, the acceptability and intelligibility of a question can be very dependant on the context in which it is asked. We decided, therefore, to reserve to a later stage the introduction of these other possible questions and concentrate first on the basic one about ethnicity. If our initial attempt proved reasonably

successful our intention was then to revise the question in the light of our experiences and to try it again in conjunction with one or more of the additional questions mentioned above.

In the event, the results of this first exercise have shown us not only the strengths and weaknesses of our attempt at composing a question on ethnicity, and indicated how acceptable a question on these lines might be to different sections of the public; it has also given us a good indication of how additional questions on religion and nationality might be received.

We were initially apprehensive about how some of our immigrants who have very mixed histories might designate themselves. It is a notable feature of several of the principal immigrant communities of non-European origin in this country, that they have come to Britain by most circuitous routes. The ancestors of our West Indian immigrants may have originated in Africa, India or China. Many of the immigrants of Indian descent were born in East Africa. We also have Chinese from Singapore and Turks from Cyprus. There are many more examples one might give of the confusion of origins which make it difficult to form a simple ethnic classification that can be readily understood by the general public, when one is forced to use terms as imprecise as "race" or "ethnic origin". West Indians, for example, cannot even in the popular sense be regarded as of one "race" and the alternative expression "ethnic group" is so esoteric. On the other hand, the ethnic categories we are attempting to distinguish have a genuine social distinctiveness. So that although we may have to express our questions in unsatisfactory language we are at least talking about something that has both meaning and significance to the general public. The problem is thus one of experimenting with words to discover the best way of conveying what we mean. This to a large extent we seem to have succeeded in doing. West Indians did not describe themselves as West Africans, Indians or as being of "mixed descent", as many could very justifiably have done. Neither did Indians born in East Africa put themselves down as Africans. There were some difficulties, however, for which we have to seek a remedy. Greek Cypriots were uncertain whether to call themselves Europeans; answers were frequently omitted for second generation (West Indian) immigrants; many Whites thought the

question did not apply to them; some people confused mixed nationality with mixed ethnicity; and those who were genuinely of mixed ethnic descent often found it difficult to know how to describe their ancestry.

The general reaction to the proposal that a question on ethnicity be introduced into the census (and social surveys) was not unfavourable. Objections came mostly from West Indians and Jewish immigrants. It is very understandable that some people in these groups in particular should have suspicions and doubts about the wisdom and indeed the motives behind the collection of data on ethnic minorities. The wisdom of doing so is a matter for public debate and government policy and cannot be discussed here; but so far as doubts about the motives for doing it are concerned, there can be no solution but to explain clearly and to reassure people, with the aid of the maximum publicity, about the purposes for which the information is being collected. In relation to the second-generation West Indians, there is also the possibility that were we to add a question on nationality and thereby enable someone to record that although of non-UK descent he is nevertheless a UK citizen, we might be able to avoid some of the hostility to the ethnicity question - because asking about ethnic origins only, without regard to citizenship, can be taken to imply that anyone who is not of UK origin continues to be in some sense different, or alien to our society, no matter how long he or his forebears have been in Britain. This sentiment came up several times in the answers of people who objected to the ethnicity question. Asking about citizenship or nationality as well as ethnic origins carries with it the tacit recognition that Britain is now a multi-ethnic society. It is impossible to estimate how much effect this change might have on the doubts and occasional outright hostility toward the ethnicity question which we encountered amongst a small section of the West Indian sample on this survey. It would seem to be worth trying, however, since it is obviously important to reduce public unease about the question as much as we possibly can.

There are, moreover, other reasons also for thinking that the addition of a question on nationality might be helpful. Thus, there were a small number of instances where mixed nationality was confused with mixed ethnic descent. They were very few in number and as we took the precaution of

asking everyone who ticked the "mixed descent" box also to describe his ancestry, these misplaced answers could be detected immediately. But, unfortunately, this request to people of mixed descent to describe their origins in full, although it served its intended purpose of enabling us to check that people were not misplaced under this heading, it also had the effect of deterring many respondents from answering the question in relation to household members who were genuinely of mixed descent, because respondents found it difficult to explain. It would be desirable, therefore, to eliminate this request to describe each instance of mixed descent and to ask the respondent simply to tick a box, as for the other principal ethnic groups. But this simpler procedure can only be adopted if we can be reasonably sure that only a negligible proportion of people are likely to be misplaced in this category. Improvements to question lay-out and instructions may help here, but the other most obvious way of reducing the chance of people with mixed national origins being ethnically misplaced is to try to distinguish between the concepts of nationality and ethnicity, in the minds of our respondents, by introducing another question specifically to do with nationality.

As we said at the beginning, there is the possibility that a question on nationality may need to be introduced into future censuses to satisfy EEC requirements and we were aware that were this to occur, it could have repercussions on the intelligibility and acceptability of our question on ethnicity. It would seem that we now have some evidence, albeit somewhat speculative, on the way in which these two questions might interact, if they were introduced in conjunction.

The most obvious objections to asking a question on nationality are that, as with ethnicity, it may seem an irrelevant if not absurd thing to ask, to many people who still think of Britain as being an ethnically homogeneous society - which of course a large part of the UK mostly is, because of the uneven residential distribution of our immigrant communities - and the other objection is that it is difficult to formulate a question on nationality because of the legal intricacies which bedevil its definition. We understand that the law on nationality is currently being reviewed, but it is uncertain when this will be completed. For our present purposes, therefore, we may have to work within the context of present law, which

means that we shall probably have to disregard finer legal distinctions and express our question in very simplified terms. If the results are inaccurate this need not concern us very much for the present providing our respondents do not have conscious difficulties answering the question.

It is unlikely, judging from the answers we received from our European immigrant sample, that a question on nationality would arouse much opposition from foreign nationals. If it could also be justified on the grounds that it was a necessary requirement of Britain's entry into the EEC, this would also have some advantages.

We have also to consider the possible introduction of a question on religion. It is doubtful if we could address a question on this topic to all households, in a census. Apart from the problem of asking about religious affiliation in a society where only a very small proportion of the population regularly attend a place of religious worship, it would also be difficult to justify doing so, especially as the reactions of some of the Jewish immigrants in our sample toward the ethnicity question suggest it might arouse public opposition. There is also the problem of distinguishing between the concepts of "religious community" and "ethnic group". It can be argued with some force that if religious affiliation is of any social significance it becomes by definition an ethnic characteristic. Thus, it is the religious affiliations of immigrants of Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin, for instance, that to a large extent justify their sub-division into separate ethnic groups. Such division, moreover, is not just of theoretical significance, for it was this very point which was mentioned spontaneously by several of our Indian respondents when asked to comment on our ethnicity question. They were disquieted not so much because we had combined the three countries of the sub-continent in one category, so much as because we appeared not to be according recognition to what they regarded as the important distinctions between their communities - namely, whether they were Hindu, Sikhs or Muslims.

To summarise the situation, it would appear likely that to attempt to collect this information from the whole population would be difficult

to justify, likely to arouse opposition and produce data of relatively little value so far as the majority are concerned; but that with the communities of Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin (including those from East Africa) it is only through asking about their religion that we can classify them in terms that they themselves recognise and which in fact have any real ethnic validity.

The solution would seem, therefore, to be straightforward. In place of our present "Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi" category we could substitute, under the heading "If of Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi origin/descent", a series of boxes labelled "Sikh", "Hindu", "Muslim", "Christian" and "Other". They would remain, of course, under the general heading of "Race or ethnic group", together with the other existing ethnic groupings. This would resolve the difficulty of having to distinguish between "religious community" and "ethnic group", and at the same time confine the question on religion to the groups for which it has important social significance and to whom it is also fully acceptable.

There remain two other changes to the question-content of the self-completion form that need to be considered. Firstly, if a question on language spoken at home should also be introduced and secondly, whether it might be desirable to include also several more standard census-type questions.

We touched previously on the reasons for wishing to investigate the possibility of asking a question about the language spoken at home.* It is already the practice in the Scottish and Welsh censuses to ask about the speaking and writing of Gaelic/Welsh, so to that extent the general principle of asking a question of this kind is already established. But such a question has not been asked in the English census previously and although it is a reasonable question to ask a Scotsman or Welshman who knows many of his compatriots speak the native tongue, it might well seem very odd to the indigenous English population were we to ask if they speak their one and only native language when at home. Moreover, to ask the whole population what language they generally speak would be an extremely inefficient way of finding out if Indian or Pakistani etc parents generally speak to their children in English - which is mainly what we want to know.

* See page 44

The sensible solution would therefore seem to be to ask this question only of Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi (and Ceylonese?) households and since presumably the whole household would speak the same language as the household head, when at home, it need only be answered in relation to the household head. This then raises the question of whether the census is in fact the best vehicle for obtaining this information, or whether, since the question needs to be asked of only a very small proportion of the population it would not be better to obtain this information by sample survey methods or in a follow-up to the main census. We shall therefore leave this issue for the time-being, for further discussion.

The final change to the content of the self-completion form that we would propose is to extend it to include several more census-type questions. Which additional questions to include can be decided later. The reason we think this would be an advantage is that if a larger range of topics could be covered it would help to avoid attracting undue attention to the ethnicity question and to the further questions on nationality and religion, if these are also included as proposed above. We noted in Section 4 that there was some evidence that people tended to be ultra-conscious of the difficulties they had in answering the ethnicity question which we think might have been partly because we put so much stress on its novelty when introducing the survey. The sheer brevity of the questionnaire might well have had a similar effect.

If a further feasibility study is mounted, on the lines proposed, we would suggest also that a larger sample be taken, selected on the same general principles as before, but ensuring that we obtain a wider representation of Asian communities, including Pakistanis and possibly Chinese. Also, instead of using a named individual as the means of identifying the sample household, we should identify only the address and include in the survey all households found to be living there. This would avoid the awkwardness that sometimes resulted this time from our having selected from the Electoral Roll a person who was not a household head, and also it would reduce the number of non-contacts which so decimated our sample (especially of West Indians) on this last occasion.

In Section 5 we reviewed the results of our endeavours, in conjunction with the staff of the Population Statistics Division, to estimate what might be

gained from substituting a question on ethnicity for the parental birthplace questions, as used in the '71 Census. The conclusions of this review can be summed up as follows. If parental birthplace data alone is used to infer ethnic origins, there are two broad categories of people that present difficulties: UK-born persons whose parents were born in different areas of the world, and people whose parents were both born in an area which gives the wrong impression of their ethnicity - which include persons of Indian descent whose grandparents originally migrated to East Africa, and third or subsequent generation immigrants to the UK.

It was shown that amongst UK-born persons whose parents were born in different areas there were in '71 a large number with one parent from the New Commonwealth and one from elsewhere. The ethnic identity of these people is very difficult to establish. They include persons of European and non-European origin, as well as a proportion of mixed ethnic descent. The Europeans in this group are likely to be reduced in future years, but the numbers of mixed descent are likely to increase very significantly.

Third-generation immigrants were relatively few in number at the time of the '71 Census, but it is estimated that by the next census in 1981, there will be as many as 150,000 UK-born women of NCW ethnic origin and of child-bearing age in Britain. None of these women's children (who of course will be "third-generation immigrants") will be identifiable as being of NCW descent, if ethnicity continues to be inferred from parental birthplaces.

One way of assisting in the identification of such groups is by looking at names as well as parents' birthplaces. This method has been developed in the Population Statistics Division, to facilitate the ethnic classification of births and deaths, and is a useful aid in establishing the ethnicity of persons with distinctive names, like Indians, Africans and Greeks etc., regardless of where their parents might have been born. Its principal drawback is that it is of no use in relation to third-generation West Indians who mostly have European-sounding names and neither can it always distinguish the progeny of mixed marriages, some of whom of course have surnames implying NCW origins and some European-type names.

The conclusion we must draw is that even if used in conjunction with an examination of personal names (which in a census would be very time-consuming), the present method of inferring ethnicity from parents' birthplaces has certain inherent limitations which will become increasingly serious in the future. It is therefore highly desirable that we investigate alternative means of collecting this information.

How the sample was selected

This was the first stage in a continuing programme of research, and a small sample was envisaged, so we could not attempt to obtain a nationally representative sample. We decided therefore to limit the coverage of the survey to a few areas known to contain relatively high proportions of several different racial/ethnic groups. The scope of the enquiry did not permit the inclusion of all the different racial/ethnic groups present in Great Britain, so we decided that the survey should include the following.

1. The major immigrant groups - ie Asian and West Indians.
2. Second-generation/Non-recent immigrants, and those who because of mixed descent might have particular difficulty in answering the race/ethnic origin question.
3. European immigrants and the indigenous white population, who might find the race/ethnic origin question unacceptable.

In order to represent these groups, the following samples were selected.

1. London Borough of Brent.

1971 Census Enumeration districts containing high proportions of West Indians were identified in the Electoral Register and a sample of 199 addresses selected. We estimated that about half the addresses would contain the indigenous white population and that the majority of the remainder would contain people of West Indian descent.

2. Leicester CB.

We selected this sample from the five Wards in Leicester which contained the highest proportions of those born in India, Pakistan and Africa. We selected from the Electoral Register 75 addresses where the names of those registered were considered to be Asian. We hoped that some of the sample would be African born of Asian descent.

3. London Borough of Camden.

We selected from the Electoral Register 75 addresses where the names of those registered were thought to be Continental European. We attempted to include a range of European nationalities in the sample, and by including some addresses where the surname was European and forename English we hoped to include some second generation immigrants.

4. Cardiff CB.

We were informed that the Bute Town area of Cardiff contained a considerable proportion of immigrants, including second-generation immigrants and people of mixed descent. This was confirmed by an

examination of the 1971 Census schedules for the area. The Bute Town area was identified in the Electoral Register and a sample of 100 addresses was systematically selected.

Thus a total of 449 addresses were selected from the Electoral Register. Since all four areas covered by the survey were highly urbanised, a considerable proportion of the selected addresses were likely to contain more than one household. To avoid the possibility of 'contamination' of responses to the questionnaire, we wished to interview at only one household per address. We therefore gave interviewers the name of the first person listed in the Electoral Register at each selected address, and instructed them to deliver the self completion form to the household of which that person was a member.

Fieldwork Report

SURVEY RECEPTION

One of the purposes of the survey was to test the public's reaction to being asked questions about their racial/ethnic origins. Interviewers were, therefore, asked to assess the reaction of the different ethnic groups. A summary of their comments is given below:

The Indians

This group appeared to be very keen to help, particularly the newer arrivals from Kenya and Uganda. This willingness to help was not specifically related to the questions on race but was more in the nature of a general eagerness to help government officials. The interviewers did, however, express doubts as to whether this group was as wholeheartedly in agreement as they appeared to be. It was sometimes felt that perhaps they were too polite to express any objections they might have had.

Some could not speak or read English very well. This occasionally made it difficult for the interviewer to explain the purposes of the survey to them, and was an obvious handicap in the interview. It also resulted in a few households obtaining outside help in translating and completing the form.

The first-generation West Indian immigrants

This was the most reluctant group of all. There seemed to be several reasons for this. First, lack of interest. The majority of the West Indians accepted the self-completion form but it proved rather more difficult to get the form back. Appointments were frequently broken or forms not completed on recall. They were simply not concerned about whether the form was completed or not.

Secondly, there was a general resistance to any kind of form-filling from some people in this group, mainly due to low educational standards. One suspects they did not always understand what information was required or how to set about completing the form, but did not like to admit it.

Thirdly, a small proportion were very distrustful of officialdom. As a result, they were suspicious of the motives behind the survey and prone to believe it was discriminatory in intent.

Second-generation immigrants

This was in fact a very mixed group of coloured immigrants from various countries who were living together in a long-established immigrant community. There were quite a number of mixed marriages between white and non-white; and in these cases, it was frequently the white wife who was interviewed. Although there was some curiosity about the survey, the form was readily accepted once people understood its purpose.

The white European immigrants

Apart from one ward where a local authority housing survey had upset some of the residents, the survey was generally well received by the group. White European immigrants were proud of their origins and therefore, keen to talk about them. There was, however, one exception: this related to three households which contained Jewish immigrants who had been persecuted during the last war and who expressed serious misgivings about the principle of collecting information on race.

The indigenous white population

The reaction was rather mixed. In Brent where the majority were, the reaction was favourable. People were pleased that someone was taking an interest in immigrants, as it affected them living in an high-density immigrant area. The few indigenous Whites interviewed elsewhere, ie in Camden and Cardiff, were less interested as they felt the survey was not of any direct concern to themselves.

PROCEDURE FOR LEAVING SELF-COMPLETION FORM

In their written instructions (see Appendix C) interviewers were told that they could leave the self-completion form with any responsible member of the named person's household. They were also told that, if by the second call they had not contacted the household, they should put the form through the letter-slot. The reason for this was to enable the interviewers to reach the interviewing stage more quickly and thereby reduce the chances of contamination between the sampled households.

However, when this procedure was followed during the first stage of the fieldwork it proved to be unsatisfactory, because it was found that if a member of the household could be personally contacted when the form was delivered, it was more likely to be completed. This was particularly so if the interviewer was able to give the form direct to the person who was to fill it in. It was also found that because all the addresses were so close together it was possible to make extra calls on households that were difficult to contact, at very little extra cost.

Finally, there was no indication that contamination between households had in fact occurred. Consequently, at the second stage of the fieldwork the limitation on the number of recalls that an interviewer was allowed to make, in order to deliver the form, was relaxed and it was left largely to the interviewer's own discretion.

FILLING-IN THE SELF-COMPLETION FORM

One other alteration was made to the instructions, between the first and second stages of the survey. Interviewers were originally told that if the sampled householder volunteered to complete the form whilst the interviewer waited, this was acceptable. The problem with this arrangement was that the form-filler was inclined to consult the interviewer while completing the form and this made it difficult to see what the informant would have done if there had been no assistance given. Consequently at the second stage interviewers were discouraged from being present during the form-filling. They were also instructed that if the situation could not be avoided they should emphasize to the form-filler that they wanted him to complete the form unaided and why this was.

MINORITY GROUPS METHODOLOGY SURVEY

Interviewers' Instructions

The purpose of this survey, as explained on the cover page of the self-completion schedule and in the hand-out leaflet, is to explore alternative methods of distinguishing racial or ethnic minority groups, for possible future use in the census and in social surveys. Up to now the census, for example, has simply used parents' birthplace as an indicator of ethnic origins; but for the reasons detailed in the hand-out leaflet this is often an inaccurate indication of ethnicity and will become increasingly unsatisfactory as the years go by.

We are therefore now attempting a more direct method of collecting this information. People are being asked, in the self-completion schedule, to tell us themselves what they consider to be their "race or ethnic origin". If you look at the categories listed at Q7 on the self-completion form, you may think that it looks to be a relatively straight-forward matter. But it is not as simple as it appears.

The terms "origin" or "descent" are ambiguous and many people who are "coloured" or "black", but were born in this country, may (quite legitimately) wish to describe themselves as being of European descent or origin. This is one of the reasons the word "White" has been added to the first category at Q7 on the self-completion form. This addition, however, does not wholly overcome the problem, because although it may succeed in dissuading an English-born "black" person from ticking the first box; it does not alter the fact that he may still wish to stress that he is European born and therefore object to being forced to describe himself simply as being of "West Indian", "Pakistani" or "Nigerian" etc descent or origin.

This brings us to another difficulty: the willingness of people in general to answer questions of this sort. As we have said in the hand-out leaflet, questions of this kind have been incorporated in the censuses of several other countries which have a racially or ethnically mixed population, for many years now. In Britain, however, it has not been tried out on a large scale before. An equally important objective of this present enquiry is therefore to ascertain the acceptability of such questions, amongst the population at large.

To sum up, therefore, the survey may be said to have two prime aims, namely:

- 1) To find out how people feel about giving details of their racial or ethnic origins (particularly, in this instance, in the context of a census-type questionnaire).
- and 2) To test how effectively the question on the form distinguishes between members of different racial or ethnic groups.

THE SAMPLE has been specially selected (from the Electoral Roll) so as to consist predominantly of households containing people of immigrant origin. Most of the adults in these households will be first generation immigrants, but we have endeavoured to ensure that there is also a proportion of second generation included. Indigenous white households are represented as well, since they form the great majority of the population and consequently we need to make sure the questions are understandable and acceptable to them also.

The principle immigrant groups represented are West Indians, Indians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, Ugandan Asians and Continental Europeans. You will find that (with the exception of Brent and Cardiff) each area sample will consist predominantly of households from one immigrant group. This is for sampling reasons, but an incidental advantage to this is that it will help to familiarise you with the more common complications and difficulties encountered by a particular immigrant group, when completing the racial/ethnic origin question.

The sampling unit is the household; although as an artefact of the sampling method employed, the form has had to be addressed to a particular individual within the sample household. Consequently, it is not essential for the form to be completed by the actual addressee. Generally speaking, it is probably best to try to get the addressee to do it; but if this is not convenient and it happens that the addressee is not also the household head, try to get the HoH to fill it in. Failing that, any adult member of the household is acceptable.

If you find the addressee has moved to another address within easy reach from the area in which you are working, then go to the new address; but remember to amend the address details on both the self-completion and follow-up schedule.

WHEN INTRODUCING the survey, after explaining who you are, in the usual way, and checking that the addressee still resides at the address, give a brief account of what the survey is about (on the lines of the description provided on the front of the self-completion form) and explain you are leaving the form to be completed and will call back for it at a convenient time, in 2 or 3 days. Explain that it is important that you should speak to the person who actually fills in the form, when you come back for it, to find out if he or she had difficulty with any of the questions. Try to establish at this point who is most likely to fill-in the form, so that you can recall at a time suitable for that person. If it is someone other than the person to whom you are speaking, then enclose with the form a copy of the (white) leaflet which describes what the Social Survey Division does. Enter the date (and time where appropriate) when you will return, on the front of the self-completion form and in your notebook.

If when you first call, the person you speak to volunteers to fill-in the form there and then, whilst you wait; accept the offer.

IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO CONTACT any adult member of the addressee's household at the first call, try once more at a different time. If you are again unsuccessful, enclose the self-completion form in an envelope (together with a white "Social Survey Division" leaflet); address it to the person

named on the address label and leave it in the letter-box. Remember before doing so, to enter on the front of the form, the date when you intend calling back to collect it.

WHEN YOU RECALL to collect the form, try to see the person who actually filled it in. If he or she is not available the first time you call, make an appointment for later when the person should be at home. If the person is still not available the second time, then it is acceptable to interview whichever (adult) member of the addressee's household you are able to speak to.

If when you call to collect the form you find the person has not completed it yet, ask him or her to do so whilst you wait.

IF THE PERSON REFUSES to complete the form (when you first attempt to deliver it or subsequently when you return to collect it) try to obtain as full an explanation as possible and record it on the Calls and Outcome Sheet. Try to ascertain if the refusal is because of objections to the question on racial/ethnic origins or for some other reason.

THE FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW

Every self-completion form which a householder has made at least some real attempt to fill-in, should be returned to the office, together with a follow-up interview schedule.

Ensure your name and authorisation number is entered at the top of the cover page and that the panels adjacent to the address label are completed, in every case.

SECTION A) should be completed only if the infmt refuses to answer any further questions. Remember, after recording as fully as possible the reasons for the refusal, also to complete Q6 at the end of the schedule and to give out a GREEN leaflet.

SECTION B) onwards is for everyone who is willing to answer the additional qns.

- Q.1 - When you ask this question you may discover that the items which have caused difficulty have been left blank or answered incorrectly. If this is the case, as well as noting the cause of the difficulty, ensure that you find out and record clearly (in the panel provided at Q.1) what the correct answer/s should have been. Do not alter what the infmt has written on the self-completion form.
- Q.2 - In the instructions for this question, printed on your schedule, you are asked NOT TO QUERY ANSWERS TO THE RACE/ETHNIC ORIGIN QUESTION, UNLESS THEY ARE UNCLEAR. This means that even if they are patently wrong - as when a coloured infmt has described himself or herself as being of European (White) descent - you should not query this, if it is consistent with the answers given for other (related) members of the household. But if this occurs it is advisable to make a note (at Q.2) of the apparent conflict between the way the form has been completed and your own observations, although the inconsistency should be picked up by the coders from your answer to Q.6.

If, however, there is any inconsistency between the way in which the ethnic or racial origins of related members of the household are described, this should be checked with the infmt. For example, if one or both parents are shown as being of West Indian descent but their children are shown as being of European (White) descent. With cases like this, simply read out what has been recorded for each of the people concerned and ask if that is correct. If the infmt says that it is correct and offers an explanation, or says that it is a mistake and tells you what it ought to be, then record this at Q.2, but do not alter what the infmt has written on the self-completion form. If the infmt merely confirms that the information is correct, but offers no explanation, do not probe any further but make a note of what happened at Q.2.

However, if the infmt has written something that is undecipherable, inadequate or ambiguous in the "other race or ethnic origin" or "mixed descent" panel, this should be queried. For example, someone might use the term "Asian" in his description, which of course covers Indian etc and Chinese, as well as other groups. If this occurs, ask the infmt if he would explain further.

Q.2 - It may happen that the "MIXED DESCENT" category is
(Contd) misunderstood and taken to mean a person who is born in a
country other than the one from which his ancestors
originated - for instance, someone might write "European
born in South Africa" or "Indian born in Uganda".
Similarly, a West Indian of (East) Indian descent may
conceivably give his birthplace as say Trinidad, but tick
the "Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi" ethnic origin box.
In cases like this, where the meaning is clear to you,
although the information has not been recorded in quite the
way we had intended, it is not necessary to query it with
the infmt but if you think it would make it clearer to the
coder, please make a note about it at Q.2.

Additionally, you should ask the infmt about anything else on
the centre or back pages of the form which is undecipherable
or ambiguous (for example, where 2 boxes have been ticked,
instead of one).

- Q.3 - This relates only to the person whom you interview.
- Q.5 - If the infmt mentioned at Q.4 (or earlier) that he or she objects
to qns about race/ethnic origins, then ring the DNA code at Q.5,
but remember to answer Q.6. PROBE fully all answers to Q.5.
- Q.6 - Try to base your coding at this question solely on your personal
impressions - as the main purpose of this question is to provide
us with an independent check on the information furnished by the
infmt. In other words, indicate what you would have guessed
to be the person's racial or ethnic origins had you not had the
benefit of seeing previously what he or she had written on the
form!

AT THE END OF THE INTERVIEW REMEMBER TO GIVE OUT A GREEN LEAFLET

WHEN YOU SEND THE DOCUMENTS INTO THE OFFICE, PLACE THE FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW
SCHEDULE INSIDE THE SELF-COMPLETION FORM AND TAG THE TWO TOGETHER, PLEASE

If you have any queries, please contact the following persons:

- (i) SAMPLING
Eileen Goddard - on extension 2384/2352
- (ii) FIELD
Norah Blackshaw - on extension 2304/2305
- (iii) RESEARCH
Ken Sillitoe - on extension 2334/2336



Appendix D

OFFICE OF POPULATION CENSUSES AND SURVEYS

SOCIAL SURVEY DIVISION

The Social Survey Division of the OPCS is a government research organisation which does social and economic surveys on behalf of Government Departments and Royal Commissions.

Up until now the questions usually asked in surveys and in the census have not enabled the government to find out enough about the general living conditions and employment of the many racial and other ethnic minority groups that now live in Britain, and about the special difficulties they sometimes have to face. The purpose of this present survey is to see if we can remedy this by finding better ways of distinguishing these groups.

In order to do this we need to ask people not only where they were born, but also to what racial or ethnic group they belong. In this questionnaire, therefore, you will find a number of questions of the kind commonly included in surveys and in the census, together with one about race or ethnic origins.

If questions about race or ethnic origins are to be widely used we have to find out if they are understandable and acceptable to everyone and therefore we are asking these questions now of all sorts of people, regardless of their colour or birthplace.

The survey is completely voluntary. But we would naturally like as many people as possible to help us with this experiment. In particular, if you find you cannot (or do not want to) answer the questions it would be most useful if you would let our interviewer know why when she calls.

The information you give us on the form will of course be treated as CONFIDENTIAL. Under no circumstances will information about named individuals be passed to any other Government Department, or any other authority or person.

We are leaving the form for you to complete by yourself. One of our staff interviewers will be calling to collect it on

.....

If you need help completing the form, please ask our interviewer when she calls. Similarly, if you have any comments to make about any of the questions, our interviewer will be very interested to hear them.

THANK YOU

Social Survey Division (OPCS)
St Catherines House
10 Kingsway London WC2B 6JP
Tel: 01-242 0262 Ext 2334

(Address label, with serial
number to be affixed here)

ENTER IN THE TOP ROW THE NAMES OF ALL MEMBERS OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD WHO USUALLY LIVE AT THIS ADDRESS.

NOTE: A household comprises either one person living alone or a group of persons (who may or may not be related) living at the same address with common housekeeping.

	1st Person			2nd Person			3rd Person			4th Person			5th Person			6th Person			7th Person			8th Person					
1 NAME (in BLOCK CAPITALS please) Begin with the head of the household	Surname			Surname			Surname			Surname			Surname			Surname			Surname			Surname					
	Forename(s)			Forename(s)			Forename(s)			Forename(s)			Forename(s)			Forename(s)			Forename(s)			Forename(s)					
2 RELATIONSHIP TO HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD For example: wife, daughter, son, boarder, visitor, etc.	(Head of household)																										
3 SEX Please tick the appropriate box	☐ Male ☐ Female			☐ Male ☐ Female			☐ Male ☐ Female			☐ Male ☐ Female			☐ Male ☐ Female			☐ Male ☐ Female			☐ Male ☐ Female			☐ Male ☐ Female					
4 MARITAL STATUS Please tick the appropriate box	☐ Single ☐ Married ☐ Divorced or Separated ☐ Widowed			☐ Single ☐ Married ☐ Divorced or Separated ☐ Widowed			☐ Single ☐ Married ☐ Divorced or Separated ☐ Widowed			☐ Single ☐ Married ☐ Divorced or Separated ☐ Widowed			☐ Single ☐ Married ☐ Divorced or Separated ☐ Widowed			☐ Single ☐ Married ☐ Divorced or Separated ☐ Widowed			☐ Single ☐ Married ☐ Divorced or Separated ☐ Widowed			☐ Single ☐ Married ☐ Divorced or Separated ☐ Widowed					
5 DATE OF BIRTH	Day	Month	Year	Day	Month	Year	Day	Month	Year	Day	Month	Year	Day	Month	Year	Day	Month	Year	Day	Month	Year	Day	Month	Year			
6 COUNTRY OF BIRTH Please tick the appropriate box OR If the person was born outside the United Kingdom, write the present name of the country in which the birthplace is situated	☐ England ☐ Scotland ☐ Wales ☐ Northern Ireland OTHER (Please write below)			☐ England ☐ Scotland ☐ Wales ☐ Northern Ireland OTHER (Please write below)			☐ England ☐ Scotland ☐ Wales ☐ Northern Ireland OTHER (Please write below)			☐ England ☐ Scotland ☐ Wales ☐ Northern Ireland OTHER (Please write below)			☐ England ☐ Scotland ☐ Wales ☐ Northern Ireland OTHER (Please write below)			☐ England ☐ Scotland ☐ Wales ☐ Northern Ireland OTHER (Please write below)			☐ England ☐ Scotland ☐ Wales ☐ Northern Ireland OTHER (Please write below)			☐ England ☐ Scotland ☐ Wales ☐ Northern Ireland OTHER (Please write below)					
7 RACE or ETHNIC ORIGIN Please tick the appropriate box (TICK ONE ONLY) If the person is of a race or ethnic origin other than one of those listed, or is of MIXED DESCENT, please tick the appropriate box, and also enter details in the space provided.	☐ White (European descent) ☐ West Indian ☐ Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi ☐ West African ☐ Arab ☐ Chinese ☐ Any other race or ethnic origin (Please write below) ☐ If of MIXED DESCENT (Please describe below)			☐ White (European descent) ☐ West Indian ☐ Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi ☐ West African ☐ Arab ☐ Chinese ☐ Any other race or ethnic origin (Please write below) ☐ If of MIXED DESCENT (Please describe below)			☐ White (European descent) ☐ West Indian ☐ Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi ☐ West African ☐ Arab ☐ Chinese ☐ Any other race or ethnic origin (Please write below) ☐ If of MIXED DESCENT (Please describe below)			☐ White (European descent) ☐ West Indian ☐ Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi ☐ West African ☐ Arab ☐ Chinese ☐ Any other race or ethnic origin (Please write below) ☐ If of MIXED DESCENT (Please describe below)			☐ White (European descent) ☐ West Indian ☐ Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi ☐ West African ☐ Arab ☐ Chinese ☐ Any other race or ethnic origin (Please write below) ☐ If of MIXED DESCENT (Please describe below)			☐ White (European descent) ☐ West Indian ☐ Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi ☐ West African ☐ Arab ☐ Chinese ☐ Any other race or ethnic origin (Please write below) ☐ If of MIXED DESCENT (Please describe below)			☐ White (European descent) ☐ West Indian ☐ Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi ☐ West African ☐ Arab ☐ Chinese ☐ Any other race or ethnic origin (Please write below) ☐ If of MIXED DESCENT (Please describe below)			☐ White (European descent) ☐ West Indian ☐ Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi ☐ West African ☐ Arab ☐ Chinese ☐ Any other race or ethnic origin (Please write below) ☐ If of MIXED DESCENT (Please describe below)			☐ White (European descent) ☐ West Indian ☐ Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi ☐ West African ☐ Arab ☐ Chinese ☐ Any other race or ethnic origin (Please write below) ☐ If of MIXED DESCENT (Please describe below)		

NOTE: If there are more than 8 persons in the household

75

HOUSEHOLD TENURE

Please tick the way in which you and your household occupy your accommodation.

As an owner occupier (including purchase by mortgage or by lease granted to you for over 21 years)

☐

Rented from a Council or New Town

☐

Rented from a private landlord or Company or Housing Association

FURNISHED

☐

UNFURNISHED

☐

With a job, shop, farm or other business (rented or rent free)

FURNISHED

☐

UNFURNISHED

☐

In some other way

☐

Please write details (including whether furnished or unfurnished)

AMENITIES

Has your household the use of the following amenities on these premises?

a A **cooker or cooking stove** with an oven

☐

YES—for use only by this household

☐

YES—for use also by another household

☐

NO

b A **kitchen sink** permanently connected to a water supply and a waste pipe

☐

YES—for use only by this household

☐

YES—for use also by another household

☐

NO

c A **fixed bath or shower** permanently connected to a water supply and a waste pipe

☐

YES—for use only by this household

☐

YES—for use also by another household

☐

NO

d A **hot water** supply (to a washbasin, or kitchen sink, or bath or shower) from a heating appliance or boiler which is connected to a piped water supply

☐

YES—for use only by this household

☐

YES—for use also by another household

☐

NO

e A **flush toilet (W C)** with entrance **inside** the building

☐

YES—for use only by this household

☐

YES—for use also by another household

☐

NO

f A **flush toilet (W C)** with entrance **outside** the building

☐

YES—for use only by this household

☐

YES—for use also by another household

☐

NO

Authorisation No.

Date self-completion schedule DELIVERED			75	(Address label with serial number to be affixed here)
Date self-completion schedule COLLECTED and infmt interviewed			75	
If infmt is the same person as on address label	YES	1		
	NO	2		

A) If at least some attempt made to fill-in self-completion schedule but infant REFUSES TO ANSWER ANY FURTHER QUESTIONS. Obtain as full an explanation as possible and record below:

Thank infmt and end interview here
BUT REMEMBER TO COMPLETE QUESTION 6

8) If at least some attempt has been made to fill-in self-completion schedule and infant agrees to answer further questions:

GIVE: i) Informant's Person No. on self-completion schedule

11) Person No. of individual who filled-in self-completion schedule . . .

GO NOW TO Q1 overleaf

NOTE: IF THE INFORMANT WAS NOT THE PERSON WHO FILLED-IN THE SELF-COMPLETION SCHEDULE, ASK THE ALTERNATIVE FORM OF THE QUESTION IN BRACKETS

Q1 Did you find any of the questions difficult to answer?

(Do you know if . . . found any of the questions difficult to answer?)

YES	1 - Ask (a) and (b)
-----	------------------------

NO

DK

Other answer
(specify)

3 - Go to
92

(a) IF YES

Which ones?

RECORD QUESTION NUMBERS BELOW AND THEN
ASK b IN RELATION TO EACH ONE MENTIONED]

(b) In what way was . . . difficult to answer?

Q2 Now check through self-completion schedule and ask infmt about anything (else) which has been omitted or needs clarifying. DO NOT QUERY ANSWERS TO RACE/ETHNIC ORIGIN QUESTION, UNLESS THEY ARE UNCLEAR. Make a brief note below, explaining any omissions or unclear entries.

D N A Nothing (else) omitted or needing to be clarified X

THEN ASK FOLLOWING QUESTIONS . . .

Q3 a) Can I just check what was your father's country of birth?

b) And in what country was your mother born?

NOTE: IF THE INFORMANT WAS NOT THE PERSON WHO FILLED-IN THE SELF-COMPLETION SCHEDULE, ASK THE ALTERNATIVE FORM OF THE QUESTION IN BRACKETS

Q4 Were there any questions which you did not like answering ? YES 1 - Ask (a) and (b)
(Do you know if there were any questions which did NO 2
not like answering ?) D K 3 Go to Q 5
Other answer 4
(specify)

a) IF YES

Which ones ?

[RECORD QUESTION NUMBERS BELOW AND THEN ASK b) IN RELATION TO EACH ONE MENTIONED]

b) What were your (his/her) reasons for not liking the question about ?

QUESTION No.	REASONS FOR DISLIKING QUESTION

30

IF INFORMANT HAS ALREADY EXPRESSED OBJECTIONS TO ASKING PEOPLE ABOUT THEIR RACIAL/ETHNIC ORIGINS THEN THANK INFORMANT AND END INTERVIEW HERE. IF NOT, THEN ASK QN 5 BELOW . . .

D N A (Already objected to qns about race/ethnic origins)

X Go to Qn 6

Q5 How do you feel personally about people being asked, in the census and in social surveys, about their race or ethnic origins?

TO BE ANSWERED BY INTERVIEWER

Q6 Judging from the informant's appearance and speech would you say his/her racial/ethnic origins are

- WHITE (European descent) 1
- Asian/Oriental 2
- West Indian/West African 3
- Other (specify) 4



THE SURVEY

As was explained on the cover page of the form you were asked to complete, this survey is an experiment in which we are testing out possible ways of getting fuller and more accurate information about the various ethnic or racial minority groups that now live in Britain.

The government has to look after the employment and general living conditions of all sections of the population. To help it to do this, the OPCS collects statistical information through social surveys and the census; and in order to find out about the circumstances of particular groups of people we have to ask for certain personal details. If we want to know about the living conditions of old age pensioners, for example, one of the things we obviously have to ask everyone, is how old they are. In the same way, to find out about the special difficulties faced by particular racial or ethnic minority groups, we need to know everyone's racial or ethnic origins.

Up to now the only way to distinguish racial or ethnic groups, in social surveys and in the census, has been through parents' country of birth. But this often gives a wrong impression of a person's origins, because the country of birth of a person's parents may not be the country from which his or her ancestors originally came. There are many white people living in the United Kingdom who have a parent who was born, for example, in India, Singapore or Nigeria. In the same way, there are people of Indian descent whose parents were actually born in East Africa; and people who are Chinese by descent, but whose parents' birthplace was in Malaya, for example. Also, in the future there will be an increasing number of United Kingdom citizens whose parents were born here but whose ancestors originally came from places like India, Pakistan or the West Indies.

The only practicable way to avoid these difficulties is to ask people to tell us what their racial or ethnic origins are. This has been the custom for many years in several other countries which have a racially or ethnically mixed population, although this is the first time it has been tried on a large scale in Britain.

As in all our surveys, the names and addresses of people who help us will be held in strict confidence by OPCS and will not be passed on to any other Government Department, or to members of the public or press. Any information collected during surveys which is given to other Government Departments, is sent in such a form that no individual can be personally identified. Similarly, in published reports the identity of an individual is never revealed, either directly or by implication.

In all our surveys we rely on people's voluntary co-operation, which is essential if our work is to be successful. We hope that this leaflet shows you how the information we are collecting will be used and that no one will suffer in any way at all from contributing to the survey.

Your co-operation is very much appreciated.

THE SOCIAL SURVEY DIVISION
Office of Population Censuses & Surveys
St Catherine's House
10 Kingsway, London WC2B 6JR
(Tele: 01-242 0262 Extn 2334)